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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001497

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SUBJECT: MASHADANI BRAVES THE POLITICAL STORM OVER THE ELECTIONS LAW, CONFLICTS WITHIN TAWAFUQ, AND THE OIL LAW

REF: BAGHDAD 70

BAGHDAD 00001497 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) Summary: The Council of Representatives (CoR) Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani discussed with the Ambassador on May 11 the second reading of the elections law earlier that day, accusing the Kurds and ISCI of slow-rolling the legislation. He affirmed, nonetheless, the law would pass when the CoR reconvenes the week of May 20. Mashadani expressed concern about pressure he faces to lift Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Duleimi's CoR immunity for previous illegal transgressions. Regarding the oil law, Mashadani complained about Kurdish demands and the Council of Ministers (CoM) for not submitting the legislation to the CoR yet for a first reading. Mashadani said he might not be able to fight off calls for a debate on a law that would repeal CPA Order 17 regarding private security contractors and their immunities. This draft law was placed on the May 7 CoR agenda at the request of CoR Security and Defense Committee Chair Hadi al-Ameri, but not discussed. End Summary.

ELECTIONS LAW

¶12. (C) Mashadani told the Ambassador the CoR had conducted the second reading of the provincial elections law earlier in the day (May 11). He accused the Kurds and ISCI of plotting against the passage of the law and added that the Kurds are pushing for a closed list system. Mashadani insisted on adhering to a tight time frame to pass the provincial elections law by mid-May, referring to the deadline in the provincial powers law. He noted, however, that the law needs modifications, including adding language for minority rights.

He expressed a desire to hear from all minority groups on this issue. Mashadani added he does not have any problem with a 25 percent quota for women. Mashadani told the Ambassador the PM would address the CoR on May 12, and that discussions on the elections law would continue during the week of May 20, when the CoR returns from a one-week recess.

A POLITICAL STORM WITHIN TAWAFUQ

¶13. (C) Mashadani told the Ambassador he had been pressured earlier in the day to lift the CoR immunity of Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Duleimi. While he did not specify the source of the pressure, it may derive from his own party, the National Dialogue Council, which is currently at odds with the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) over a vetted return to PM Maliki's government. Mashadani stressed, "I do not want a political storm within Tawafuq." Mashadani said Duleimi used to be called the "Knight of Arabs," but then discussed his legal problems (reftel). "Duleimi has made mistakes," said Mashadani. He added, "He should go to Jordan and stay there." Mashadani said he has tried to get Duleimi to take a vacation or resign from the CoR, but that Duleimi insists on

participating in CoR since he receives a salary.

OIL LAW

¶4. (C) Mashadani shared with the Ambassador that he recently held meetings on the hydrocarbons legislation with the Kurds, naming Khalid Schwan (PUK), Sa'adi Barzjini (KDP), and Mahmoud Othman (Independent Kurd), in particular. He expressed frustration that the Ministry of Oil and Council of Ministers (CoM) has not sent draft legislation to the CoR yet, and was eager to conduct a first reading. The Ambassador expressed concern that a first reading without Kurdish agreement could cause them to boycott the CoR. In response, Mashadani complained about the Kurds insistence on ensuring a quota of oil (and revenues) for themselves. He also expressed ire about the increasing price of oil, adding the passage of the oil law is in the "best interest" of the Iraqi people.

CPA ORDER 17

¶5. (C) A law meant to repeal CPA 17 and security contractor immunities was placed on the CoR's agenda May 7, at the request of Hadi al-Ameri, the Chair of the CoR's Security and Defense Committee. However, the CoR did not discuss it and the law did not appear on the agenda the rest of the week. In response to USG concerns regarding this legislation, Mashadani quickly deflected whether he would keep this law off of the agenda. "If the CoR insists on the law," whispered Mashadani, "I may not be able to fight it since I am under pressure." The Ambassador stressed this law would be an obstacle to Strategic Framework Agreement/SOFA negotiations.

BAGHDAD 00001497 002.2 OF 002

MASHADANI'S REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

¶6. (C) Mashadani asked the Ambassador for assistance with the Iraqi Parliamentary Union, which held its first conference on May 7. "There is no union like it in the Arab World," said Mashadani proudly, claiming it is also a non-partisan organization. He asked for the embassy's support on this project. He also talked about an Institute of Parliamentary Development, a non-governmental organization he is interested in forming to train future generations of parliamentarians. Mashadani also presented the Ambassador with a letter addressed to President Bush (septel).

CROCKER